



LOVE  
your  
blood

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ABOUT US  
& THANK YOUS  
ON THE  
BACK

D.I.Y. HEALTH  
FOR UTIS &  
YEAST INFECTIONS

ON  
A

women's perceptions and experiences of their bodies



the feminine hygiene products industry is one of the most lucrative businesses within the realm of consumerism. although most women rarely think about it, we have all been negatively affected by this corrupt industry. because these products, including pads, tampons, and douches are such a regular part of women's lives, most of us are unaware of the complex ways that we have been influenced.

women have been misled into believing that we need and want to purchase certain products that in reality aren't always necessary or healthy. corporations have created a false consciousness, not only for women, but for every consumer.



have been influenced and

shaped by the use of feminine hygiene products.

# Tampons

## WHO INVENTED TAMPONS?

Nearly ALL major brand tampons and pads contain synthetic fibers (rayon being the most significant) and go thru a chlorine bleaching process. The chlorine bleaching produces toxic by-products such as dioxin and furan. Tetrachlorodibenzodioxin (TCDD) commonly known as dioxin, is one of the deadliest substances ever produced. Even very small amounts are known to cause a range of health related problems, including birth defects, headaches, and cancer.

Why are "hygiene products poisoning our bodies?"

this dioxin byproduct has been linked with cancer, toxic shock syndrome, endometriosis, birth defects, and other health problems. when we use these products in and on our bodies, the effects can be harmful.



-Tampons promote the risk of cervical dysplasia (aka 'pre-cancerous' cells); cervical, ovarian, and bladder cancers; yeast infections; and eroding of cervical tissue.

tampons are especially harmful because they are worn internally for long periods of time in one of the most absorbent parts of a woman's body.

environmental damage



within the environment, the damaging dioxins accumulate, causing harm to plant and animal life. factories that produce paper products, including pads and tampons, release huge amounts of dioxin into waterways. through fish and birds, dioxin travels up the food chain via fat cells where it is stored. the environment is also seriously affected by the amount of waste that feminine hygiene products and packaging create. pads, plastic tampon applicators, and plastic packaging are not biodegradable. in us →

12 billion pads  
7 billion tampons  
per year



-Tampons absorb 90% of the vagina's natural secretions. Think about it....you are placing one of the most deadliest substances ever produced next to the most absorbent part of your body. Not only are you subjecting yourself to a deadly carcinogen, but it's also sucking you dry!

feminine hygiene products make up a \$1.7 billion dollar industry!!

WHAT SOME  
TAMPONS  
DO TO OUR  
BODIES

-Tampon applicators can scratch the vaginal walls and cause arterial lacerations.

These cuts form a point of entry for toxins and bacteria.



Product	Tampax*	Playtex	O.B.	Pursettes
Chlorine	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Compound				
Absorbency	Yes	Yes	Yes	Polyethyl ene
Enhancers				
Natural/ Synthetic Fibers	Rayon & Cotton (regular is 100% bleached cotton)	Cotton & Rayon Polyacrylate & "polysorbate-20"	Rayon & Cotton	100% Rayon
Deodorant/ Fragrance	No	Some Contain Fragrance	No	No
% Associated Toxic Shock	5%	20%	2%	0
Applicator	Bleached paper and cardboard	Polyethylene Plastics	None	None

# WORRY?-BUT WHY?

Get Modess with the  
triple-proved deodorant!

although the manufacturers and advertisers of feminine hygiene products attempt to convince women consumers that their products are beneficial, healthy, and necessary, the truth is that these products have been invented not only as a way to make money, but also as a way to maintain control over women's bodies and minds.



At first, since menstruation was (and still is)

such a taboo topic, Kotex couldn't get their ads printed. The first Kotex ad (which featured a wounded male soldier) was printed in 1921.

FREEDOM FROM WORRY! Garden-fresh  
daintiness every day of the month...  
girl wants it... and all  
girls are a

through advertisements, we are taught that although our bodies are very shameful, it is possible to be saved from this humiliation and shame by using certain products and brands. tampons and pads are portrayed as products that will safeguard us from the pollution and embarrassment of menstruation. advertisements of menstrual products often use terms like *protection, safety, assurance, and confidence.*

Box 353, Milltown, N. J.

FROM what??

wtf.  
my cunt  
is not  
supposed  
to  
smell  
like a  
garden.



# HISTORY & reclaiming HERSTORY!

the rise of industrialism and consumer culture until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was not a consumer culture in the US. for the most part, people made much of their own clothes, food and anything else that they needed to live. when the US started to urbanize and industrialize, a consumer culture was born. this is one of the factors that upholds the feminine hygiene industry. there are few alternatives to the options that are offered to us in terms of menstrual products, so we are forced to participate in the industry whether we like it or not.

## the medicalization of women's bodies

many american doctors at the turn of the century, (very few of whom were women) offered women advice about the "problems" of menstruation and hygiene. many doctors had extremely skewed perceptions about women's bodies (they weren't sure whether the fallopian tubes or the ovaries triggered menstruation...!) the feminine hygiene product industry was founded on the opinions and theories of this era of medicine. and today women's bodies are still over-medicalized... did you ever wonder why women are told to see the gynecologist yearly while men aren't told to see a doctor unless they have a problem?

Since the rise of modern medicine in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, women herbalists, midwives and healers have been almost completely replaced by licensed male doctors. Rarely in today's society are women taught to learn about caring for and healing their own bodies as their ancestors did. Not until the turn on the 20<sup>th</sup> century were even a small minority of women permitted by law to study modern medicine.


over the years, manufacturers of feminine hygiene products have become successful at the expense of women's bodies and minds.

Health is undervalued in our society which is why dangers of feminine hygiene products are not discussed or addressed.

sexism.


↑ This is what we should be worried/annoyed about.

Alternatives are out there! & you have choices...




Reusable pads - 100% cotton washable menstrual pads, in tons of great colors or undyed, unbleached organic cotton. \*\*\* [www.gladrags.com](http://www.gladrags.com) [or] [www.fussybutt.com](http://www.fussybutt.com) (panty liners too) [or] [www.goddessmoons.com](http://www.goddessmoons.com) (♀-owned home business) [or] [www.lunapads.com](http://www.lunapads.com) (they have organic cotton & sea sponge tampons, keepers, & padded panties too) [or] [www.mamaelle.com](http://www.mamaelle.com) (also sells natural cosmetics & teas) [or] [www.mariymoonsalternatives.com](http://www.mariymoonsalternatives.com) [or] [panderapads.com](http://panderapads.com) (cotton as well as disposable pads & shields, cotton/sea sponge tampons).


also check out [etsy.com](http://etsy.com)!




The Keeper is a natural rubber cup that is worn internally & used over and over. It collects your blood and when it's full (3-24 hrs depending on your flow) you take it out, dump it out, and put it back in. Lasts ~ a lifetime! \*\*\* [www.keeper.com](http://www.keeper.com)  
They also sell them at Whole Foods, A Cooler Planet, or maybe Women & Children First if you're in Chicago!




The DivaCup - is a reusable cup much like the Keeper but made from soft medical-grade silicone, which is latex-free, hypoallergenic, & odorless.  
\*\*\* [www.divacup.com](http://www.divacup.com) and Chicago stores (see above)  
(☺ this is our favorite option)



Sea sponges are reusable, eco-friendly alternatives to tampons. It won't get lost & can be easily cleaned in boiling water, vinegar & water, or baking soda & H<sub>2</sub>O.  
\*\*\* [www.jadeandpearl.com](http://www.jadeandpearl.com) or buy one in your local health/drug store & trim to size



Natural Tampons - Made w/ 100% organic cotton, bleach- & toxin-free. Cool! \*\*\* [www.byteserve.com.au/EcoYarn](http://www.byteserve.com.au/EcoYarn) (the 1st official makers!) [or] [www.naturacare.com](http://www.naturacare.com) (has pads too) [or] [www.organicessentials.com](http://www.organicessentials.com) widely distributed - available at most health/food stores



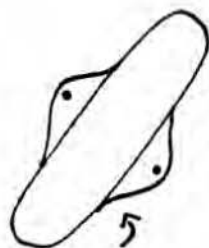
The Diaphragm can prevent pregnancy as well as catch your blood.



# easy D.I.Y. pads

① make a paper template for the size + shape you want (undies can serve as a good template)

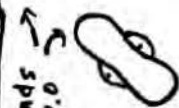
② cut 2 pieces from yr paper pattern - one will be the topside (against yr junk) and the other will be the underside



③ cut a slit in the piece that's the "underside"

make sure wings can overlap underneath yr undies

- ⊕ use flannel! colorful fabric or fun patterns
- ⊕ to wash: soak in cold  $H_2O$  then wash as you do yr clothes
- ⊕ sew w/ a machine or needle!

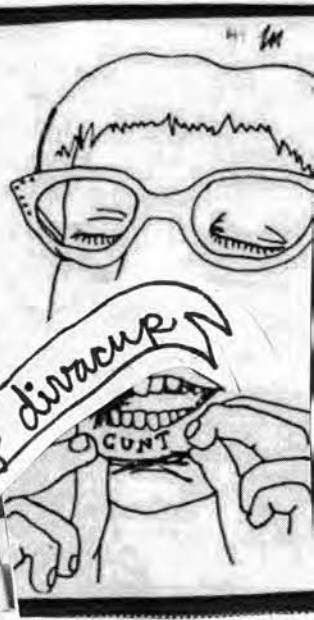


④ sew pieces together!

zig-zag stitch works well

⑤ add snaps or velcro for closure (on wings)

\* If desired, add layers of fabric into the pad via the slit on the underside - this will allow you to control absorbency \*



We all have our own ways of getting them in...and out. We're happy to share tricks!

The DivaCup comes with detailed instructions for insertion, but it can still be tricky sometimes. I'm not gonna lie to you - I was extremely frustrated the first few times I used it. I was nervous, so my muscles tightened up, making it difficult to get it in and positioned correctly. I tried it out for a cycle, switched back to cloth pads for a few months, then came back to the DivaCup when I was feeling more determined. My point is that you need to relax. I find that if I'm particularly bloody (like on the first two days of my period), it slides in no problem, but if the flow is slowing down, or I've just hopped fresh outta the shower, it takes a little more effort to get it in right.

Don't be afraid to play around with it. If it's inserted correctly, you should barely be able to feel it, and you shouldn't have any problems with leakage. In fact, most of the time I forget it's even there. A lot of people complain about how finicky the thing can be, but the only way to perfect it is to try, try again. After a few cycles, you'll get to know your flow. You'll know exactly how much you bleed on any given day and how often to empty your cup. Bear in mind that it shouldn't be left in longer than 12 hours.

LOVE  
Your  
BLOOD.  
xx ♡ xx

15 ml  
MADE IN CANADA

My foray into the world of alternative menstrual products began with cloth pads. If you're going to bleed onto something, it may as well be soft flannel. Plus, you can make pads out of all sorts of ridiculous

fabric and walk down the street happily, knowing that there are polkadots and kittens and skulls in your underwear. Try searching Etsy.com for cloth pads, there are plenty. There are also many tutorials out there if you wanna make your own. I've been using my DivaCup for a little over a year now. They are available online at DivaCup.com as well as at various sex shops and health food stores. I bought mine at Venus Envy, along with a leopard-spotted vibrator - that was a good day for my cunt! Menstrual cups cost around \$40 and are made to last 10-15 years. Fifty bucks may sound like a lot of money, but compare that to the \$100-\$200 the average woman spends on pads and tampons every year. Suddenly fifty bucks doesn't sound so bad! Ever since I started talking about mine, friends have been asking me plenty of questions. I did a lot of reading up before I bought one and I've found the tales of other ladies' experiences to be quite helpful, so I figured I'd offer up a few of my own observations...

at 2  
Whole  
Foods  
or  
Women &  
Children  
First  
in  
Chicago

TWENTY FOUR

I ♥ MY DIVACUP.

→ qzap.org  
Culture Slut, → hello amber.etsy.com

from  
Cult  
#20, 4  
zine by

# keeping track of your body's physical changes throughout your cycle

lots of things change in four weeks (on average), but the easiest (most fun) things to keep an eye (or finger) on are:

- basal body temperature
- cervical position
- cervical mucous



we're talkin' 0.4 degrees here...

\*\*\*  
\* FIRST DAY OF \*  
\* YOUR CYCLE IS \*  
\* THE FIRST DAY \*  
\* THAT YOU BLEED \*  
\*\*\*

**What to look for on your basal body temperature chart.**

(do this in the morning, consistently)

During the first part of a woman's menstrual cycle basal body temperatures will be lower. Right before ovulation you will have a slight drop in temperature followed by a sharp rise in temperature.

Around the time of ovulation, you will see a rise in temperature. By the time you notice this rise in temperature, you have already ovulated.

## TYPES OF CERVICAL MUCOUS:

These are the types of mucous you will likely see during your menstrual cycle. Keep in mind that everyone's body is different. If you are charting it is a good idea to write down what kind of cervical mucous you have during your cycle.

**Dry:** At the beginning of your cycle, prior to ovulation you will likely produce little to no cervical mucous. Also right before your period should start your cervical mucous may become dry again. If you do not notice cervical mucous you will want to record this on your chart as dry.

**Sticky:** You may notice sticky cervical mucous prior to ovulation. It feels sticky to your fingers when you touch it.

**Creamy:** As you get closer to ovulation you will notice thicker, creamy-looking cervical mucous. This mucous looks and feels similar to lotion.

**Eggwhite:** Eggwhite cervical mucous is the term used to describe the mucous you have during ovulation. It looks like eggwhites and is slippery, clear, and stretchy.

**Watery:** Watery cervical mucous is wet and may be stretchy. You may notice this type of cervical mucous during ovulation or before having eggwhite cervical mucous.



## CERVICAL POSITION

(squat + put your fingers in your cunt - go exploring!)

Right after menstruation, your cervix will be low and easier for you to reach. It will feel firmer and closed. During ovulation your cervix will be higher and more difficult to reach. It will also feel soft, wet and you may notice it feeling more open. If you have given birth before your cervix may feel more open than someone who has not. After ovulation, your cervix normally returns to a more firm, lower position.

any more rows it would be too small! please add

12

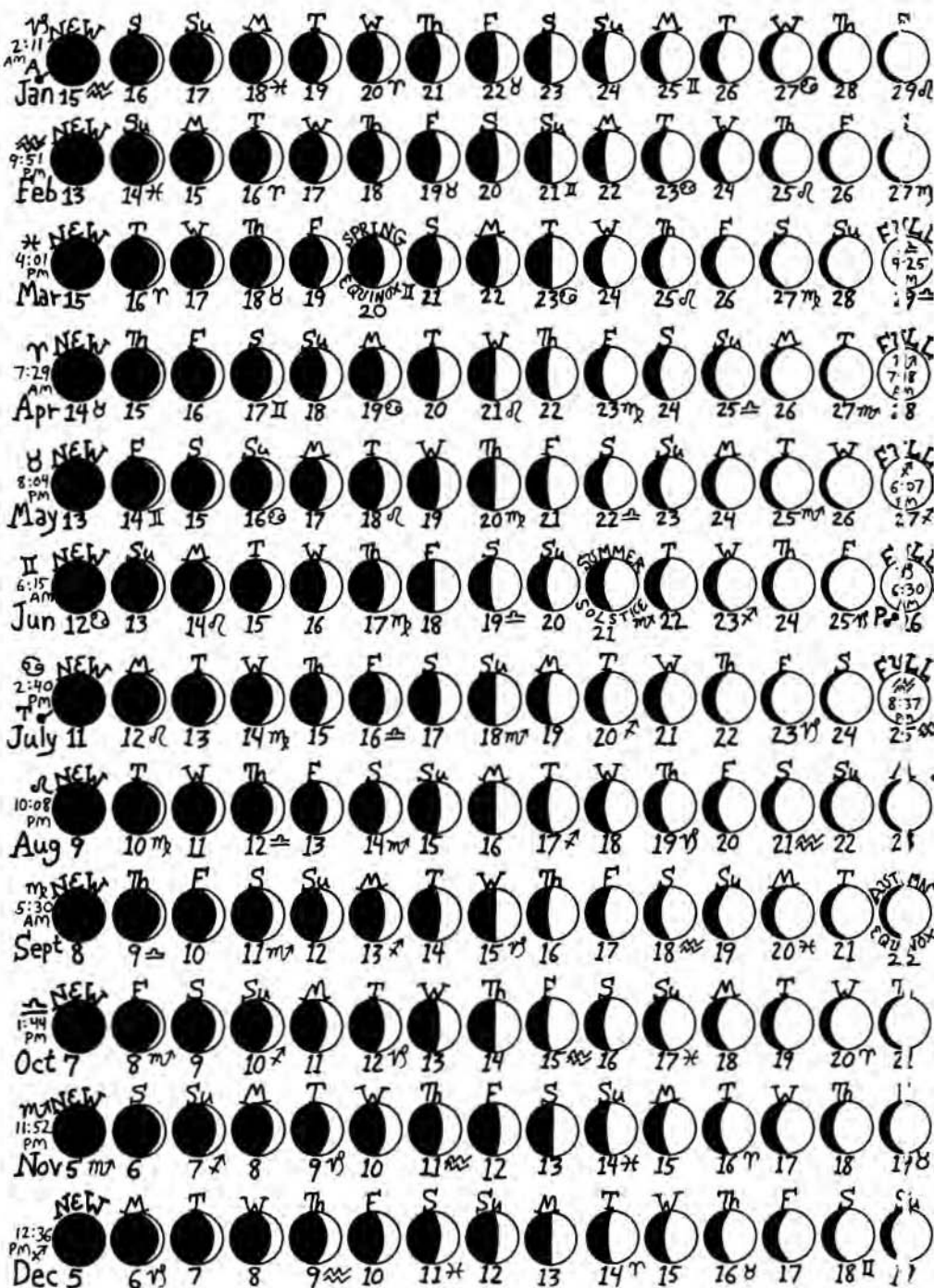
we all know the "average" cycle is 28 days - most of us fluctuate, but it includes

day of cycle FIRST DAY OF PERIOD	temperature: lower (96-98: before ovulation) or higher (97-99: after ovulation)	cervical mucous: dry, sticky, creamy, eggwhite-y, watery	cervical position: low or high (can you touch it? is it soft? hard?)	misc: mood? physical discomfort or tenderness? bloating? headaches?
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your own! + MAKE COPIES OF THIS!

PLEASE RIPOUT + USE PAGES 12-15!  
they're for you!





All times in Eastern Standard Time(-5 from GMT)

Add one hour during Daylight Savings.

Eclipse Key: ☉ = Solar ☾ = Lunar

T = Total A = Annular P = Partial

Lunar Eclipses are visible wherever it is night and cloud free around time of full moon.

Spring Equinox: Mar 20, 12:32 pm

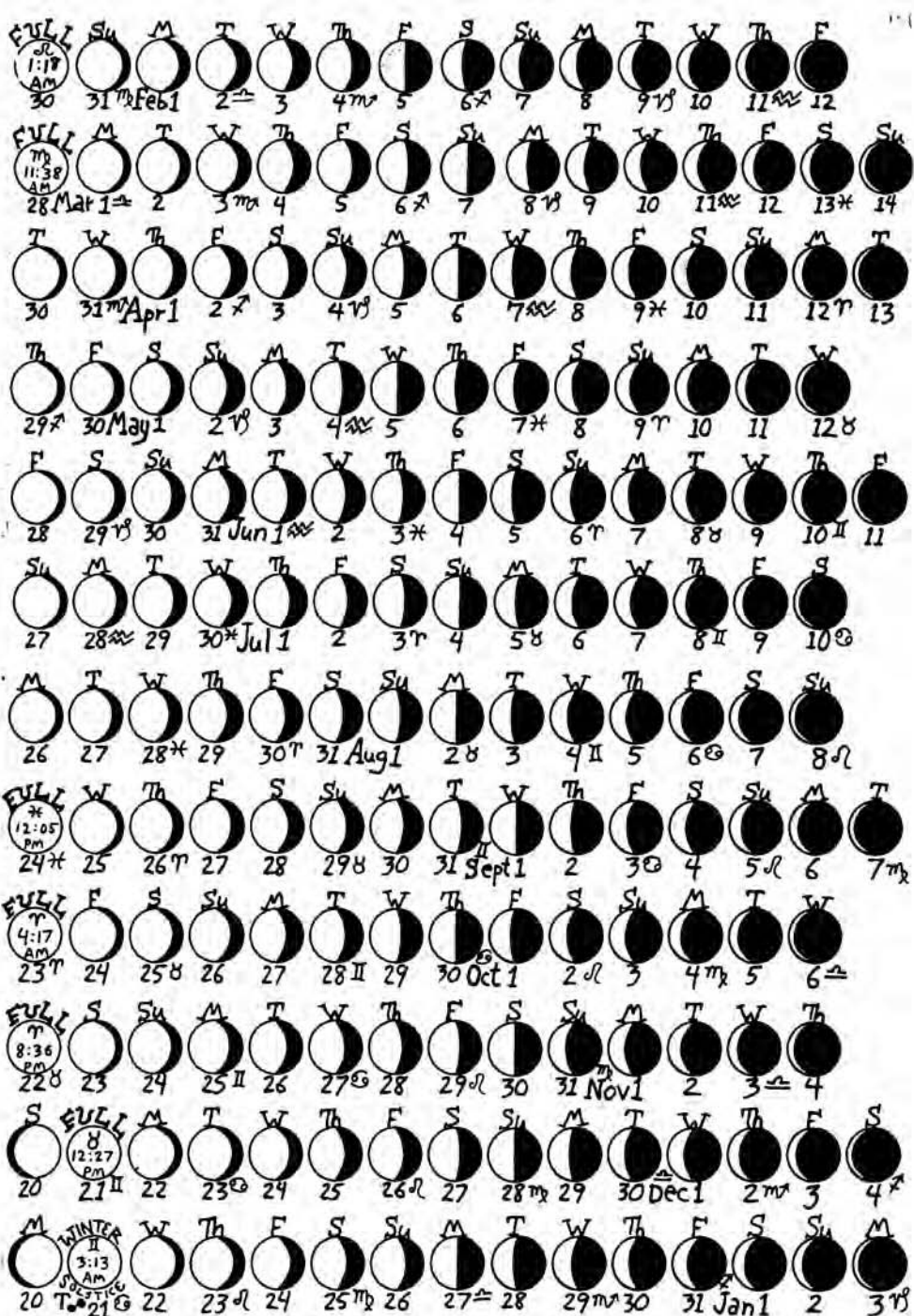
Autumn Equinox: Sept 22, 10:09 pm



Summer Solstice: June 21, 11:28 am

Winter Solstice: Dec 21, 6:38 pm





something BIG I haven't mentioned is the importance of the LUNAR CYCLE! also 28 days, every day is different, waxing and waning, full and new. sounds like you, eh? keep an eye on your friend in the sky-- you may even sync your cycles if you do. (I was bleeding on the full moon for 6 months last year!)

2010

## Menstrual calendar

2010	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu
January	1 29	2 30	3 31	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
February	26	27	28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
March	26	27	28	1 29	2 30	3 31	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
April	23	24	25	26	27	28	1 29	2 30	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
May	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	1 29	2 30	3 31	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
June	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	1 29	2 30	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
July	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	1 29	2 30	3 31	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
August	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	1 29	2 30	3 31	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
September	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	1 29	2 30	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
October	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	1 29	2 30	3 31	4	5	6	7
November	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	1 29	2 30	3	4
December	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	1 29	2 30

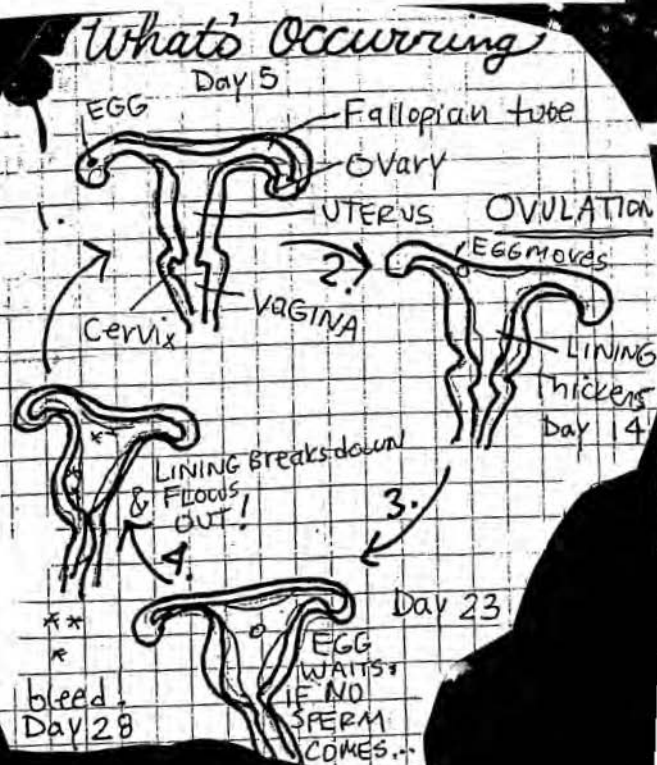
This is ~~your~~ **your** menstrual calendar for 2010. **rip it out! keep it in a safe space + USE IT!** If your period is regular, you can use this calendar to tell at a glance what day to expect it. Say your first period of the new year starts on Saturday January 9. If your cycle is 28 days, your next one will start on the day directly below Jan. 9, or February 6. If your cycle is shorter, you'll get a diagonal line to the left, and if it's longer, a diagonal line to the right. If your cycle is not regular, you'll get dots all over the place.

<http://slingshot.tao.ca>

# What is birth control doing to my body?!

(the PILL)

In a normal menstrual cycle (that is, in a woman not using hormonal contraception), the hypothalamus (a hormone-releasing gland in your brain) releases *gonadotropin-releasing hormone* (GnRH), which stimulates the secretion of *follicle-stimulating hormone* (FSH) and *luteinizing hormone* (LH) by the anterior pituitary gland. A few days before menstruation the anterior pituitary increases how much FSH and LH it is secreting. This causes the maturation of follicles in the ovaries, and usually only one follicle continues to grow, secreting increasing amounts of estrogen. As more estrogen is secreted, the hypothalamus stops secreting GnRH which inhibits the anterior pituitary gland from secreting FSH and LH. Around days 12-14 of the menstrual cycle, the increasingly high amounts of estrogen pass a threshold point, and the hypothalamus increases secretion of FSH and causes a huge surge in LH levels. This surge in LH is what causes ovulation—the mature follicle ruptures and releases an egg. The newly-hatched egg moves from the ovary, through the fallopian tubes, and into the uterus. The ruptured follicle cells in the ovary are called the *corpus luteum*, and they secrete estrogen and progesterone. Progesterone especially builds up and maintains the lining of the uterus (called the endometrium). Around day 26 if the egg has not been fertilized, the corpus luteum decomposes, which drastically lowers the amounts of these hormones, causing the uterine lining to slough off during menstruation.



17 Combination oral contraceptives, that is, ones that use both estrogen and progesterone, function primarily by inhibiting follicular development, ovulation, and, as a consequence, corpus luteum formation. Combination oral contraceptives create a hormonal environment that maintains levels of estrogens and progesterones such that they consistently prevent the hypothalamus and anterior pituitary from secreting their normal levels of FSH and LH. This prevents the surges in hormones around days 12-14 which would otherwise lead to ovulation. **By maintaining high levels of estrogen and progesterone, contraceptives trick your body into thinking that you've always just released an egg, so you never ovulate...making pregnancy impossible.**

## What are the costs of playing these tricks on your body?

By synthetically altering a woman's natural amounts of these hormones, oral contraceptives affect the entire body, including our cognitive and emotional states of being. This zine is mostly about menstruation, so we won't get into talking about how having extra hormones going through your *whole* body (as opposed to locally, like with an IUD/intrauterine device) can mess with other natural processes—when you think about it this way, no wonder oral contraceptives affect your mood, weight, and sensitivity to other medicines (including antibiotics).

Oral contraceptives aren't the only way to prevent pregnancy! (If you're curious, there's lots of info out there on diaphragms, condoms, IUDs, peaks and lows of fertility, and herbal contraceptives.) **So why are doctors so eager to prescribe them...?**



**The medical industry is way more likely to tell *women* what to do with our bodies to prevent pregnancy than suggesting that *men* take responsibility for preventing pregnancy.** (Did you know that vasectomies are reversible? Some vasectomies do not actually sever the vas deferens (the tube that sperm travel through from the testes) — a 'no cut' procedure instead uses clips to block the vas deferens. A vasectomy will only prevent the release of sperm (but not semen) and would not provide protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs).) Both men and women have been cheated out of transparent information about birth control options and mutual responsibility by biased research and industries oriented toward [straight] male pleasure. Preventing pregnancy should be the responsibility of you *and* your sexual partner—not just the female-bodied partner!

Info from Christine Heller's paper on birth control & depression  
& Go Ask Alice!: Reversible vasectomy?

16  
as women have come to feel negatively about our  
...dreading it, resisting it, hating it, we were never allowed to  
...ly talk about it and when we did, it was embarrassing. the fear of  
...ing as a dirty secret experience is reinforced by bleached white,  
...derant, disposable feminine "hygiene" products that hide our  
...ing not only from others, but from ourselves as well. as we  
...ckly flush the evidence down the toilet (or put it in those little  
...ver boxes inside the stall), we deny our bleeding, not to mention the  
...nowledge of how much and why. how often is "what are you, **on the**  
...ag?" thrown out as an insult, like the only thing menstruation does is  
...ake us a bitch.

Throughout history, menstrual and menopausal symptoms have been seen  
as a mental condition blamed upon a neurosis. The term "hysterectomy" literally  
means the removal of hysteria - otherwise known as the removal of the uterus.  
Hysterectomies account for one of the most widely practiced operation in the  
U.S. (According to the National Center for Health Statistics in 2002, 16% of  
all inpatient surgeries were hysterectomies!) and also one of the most fraudulent,  
with 90% currently deemed unnecessary. Women are still methodically referred  
for psychological help and told that "premenstrual syndrome" is psychological  
and not hormonal (a syndrome is defined as a group of symptoms that  
collectively characterize a disease or disorder, when in fact, before electricity,  
women bled by the cycle of the moon). - From "An Herbal Menstru-  
ation by Abundant Hitches"

## THE WORD ON PMS

besides the inevitable social crap involved, real things do happen to  
women during and in preparation for menstruation. there are  
significant hormonal, mental, and physical changes involved that  
affect our moods. but this does not have to be negative! in ancient  
times, women embraced their bleeding time as one of enhanced  
creativity and power. it is one that is ours and was reserved for  
women to be alone or with each other, usually in "isolation huts."  
modern society does not recognize this need, but rejects the experience  
entirely. now we find ourselves in a structure that makes isolation  
impractical and scorned. (having your period is not considered an  
excuse for skipping work or class.) why are natural, cyclical mood and  
bodily changes considered a "syndrome?" maybe it's an ill effect of how  
we are raised to think about bleeding and how we are treated when we  
do it.

Viewing menstruation as a curse, many  
women never realize at all that through extra nurturing they can learn to feel well  
and learn more about their bodies and what they truly need at the same time.  
Rather than feeling sluggish and frustrated, and relying on pain relievers and the  
like, we can make herbal teas and take warm baths, soothe ourselves and feel  
good about having taken the time out to have done so. Many of us don't think  
that we have that kind of time, but don't stop for a minute in our routines or  
work, school, activism, or mothering to think about how much better we'd feel if  
we took that time. Our bodies and lives are ours, we need not forget that.

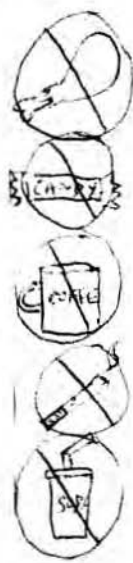




# CRAMPS

## Diet:

Cramping is due largely to shitty diets, particularly those high in meat, dairy, sugar, fat, caffeine, and processed foods. Toxins build up in our systems and as our periods are a type of elimination, they are carried out with the flow. The more toxins present, the more pain we experience in their elimination. Other factors may be involved, but if you know your diet sucks, try improving it & see if you notice a difference.



Eat: foods high in B vitamins such as leafy greens, avocados, cabbage, raisins, soybeans, brewer's yeast, wheat germ, & brown rice.





Added supplements: Vitamins D & E, calcium, Magnesium, Potassium, & Iron.

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Herbs: Chamomile & Peppermint tea are really soothing overall. Pennyroyal tea is helpful in small amounts (1 cup a day), but not good for heavy bleeders. Raspberry leaf lightens flow.

ginger tea is good too. just eat fresh slices of ginger.  
for cramps: cramp bark, black & blue cohosh, dong quai. Other pain: cloves, lobelia, catnip, wild yam, Skull cap, Valerian & Kava Kava.

PSYCHOACTIVES: marijuana - smoked or injected. Valerian - tincture under tongue or in water

From "Wives' Tales" by Britten Neubucher

by ALANNA STITCHER

The most common of these changes are exacerbated by stress or a poor diet. During the week before you are due to bleed, work on lessening stress and be a little more gentle with yourself. Massage and lightly can help as well. cut down your intake of salt, caffeine and alcohol. If you have cramps, you may notice your cramps increase if you take a sip of coffee or smoke a cigarette - pay attention to what your body is telling you. A diet made up of large intakes of meat, dairy, sugar, fat, and processed foods can accentuate cramps or mood changes. Try to increase your intake of potassium, vitamins A and B6, magnesium and calcium, and iron if you feel weak while bleeding. Drink lots of water to help clean the toxins out of your system. A lot of the toxins that build up in our bodies are carried out with our menstrual flow. The more toxins present, the more pain we are likely to experience.

Foods with high quantities of some vitamins and minerals

Potassium	Bananas, potatoes, cabbage, pears, almonds
Vitamin B & B6	Leafy greens, avocados, cabbage, raisings, soy products, wheat germ, brown rice, and brewer's yeast or nutritional yeast (be careful if you are prone to yeast infections)
Vitamin A (can be helpful for sore breasts and cramping)	carrots, sweet potatoes, onions, garlic, turnips, spinach, lentils, apricots, lemons
Iron (feeling weak is a sign your body needs iron)	Spinach, raisins, lima beans, peanut butter, nuts and dried beans, black-eyed peas, sweet potatoes, dried fruit, oatmeal, most pastas, brown rice, cream of wheat and prunes

# 21 ★ ~ ★ Relief Techniques! ~ ★

**MOVEMENT:** Lying on your back, bring knees to your chest & hold for as long is comfortable. Release & repeat until feels better. If pain is greater on one side (in one ovary), lay on that side & bring bottom leg into chest. You can also put your foot on a chair & lean into the pain.

exercise! massage! and regular stretching/yoga is good too!

[Keep yr body movin']

but the funnest of all is the

## orgasm

masturbating is relaxing → it loosens your muscles + tight spots... perfect for cramps!

ADDING BLOOD TO YOUR SEX LIFE can make things really exciting. It's bodily, beautiful, colorful, + messy.

try smearing blood on your + your partners face + body

more on blood & orgasm...

... **HOT**



Sure fire & most fun! Invite your lover to share in your monthly blood ritual. It's quite a bonding experience! Having sex really helps (it can also

bring on your period), but the 1st day may be too tender for some. The motion of sex helps relax the muscles & orgasm relieves a tightened cervix. Masturbating works swell too. Be prepared - blood can often spurt out of ya.

When your uterus contracts in orgasm. Messy, but fun!

Some women reserve this time of the month for themselves, but others find it really nice for the enhanced intimacy.

Aren't a good snuggle works just as well!



# period sex

period sex can be hot, new, and different — but isn't great for everyone. some folks have heightened arousal while bleeding or love to fuck while on their period. And some folk find sex on their period uncomfortable (one's cervix is lower in the vagina during yr period, which causes pain for some) (and pleasure for others!) extra mess thing? not for everyone



There may be higher risk for STI transmission while bleeding so keep it safe! otherwise, period sex is totally fine for your body



sex on yr period can be

Hot

- extra fluid / lube
- cramp-relievin'!
- releases hormones that can help w/ mood swings or mild depression
- messy can be sexy

earn your red wings! by going down on someone who's on their period.



penetrative sex  
normal during period  
injected cups & vibrator  
can be fun  
not for everyone



but isn't it messy??!

try it in the shower!

"sex is supposed to be messy. Many kinds of sex already involve bodily fluids. And if not literally messy, sex is often emotionally or intellectually messy" — Heather Corinna

# Bleed like a man

When I started identifying as transgender (FTM\*), I found myself confused about how to feel about my period. I was totally into the Love Your Body, radical feminist, womyns empowerment stuff but now I don't really feel like a woman most of the time. For many transguys, menstruation is a bad time — it doesn't match up with our bodies or how we think about our junk. I often feel like if I've gone through all this shit (self-reflection, buying new clothes, changing my name) to start living as not-so-female, why do I still have to deal with bleeding every month?

\* (FTM is female-to-male, born ♀ but living as a "he")  
MTF is ♂-to-♀, born ♂ but living as a "she").

## WAYS TO DEAL (or even start lovin your blood again)

\*\* Try using a DivaCup, reusable pads (d.i.y.!), or just bleed in your pants. (I actually do this a lot.) You change it less often (6-48 hrs vs. 3-6 hrs for tampons), you get to know your junk better, and you save money. Plus, you won't have to deal with the feminine hygiene aisle...and seeing your blood is cool!

\*\* Find new words that help you masculinize/genderneutralize your period. I like "bleeding;" I've heard other guys use "monthly issues," "bloodtimes," & "manperiod." Everyone bleeds from somewhere...make up your own words!

\*\* Find ways to revel in your bloodiness (if you want.) Play w/ your blood in the shower, paint with it, water your plants, explore its sexual possibilities. Blood is human, not gendered.

\*\* If you get depressed, get a rad blood-lovin friend to talk you up—e.g. isn't it cool that your body is eliminating toxins? & that your body is synced with the moon? It always takes pain to release blood...doing it monthly can make you a stronger man/boi/queermo.

\*\* T (testosterone) makes your period go away. (This is reversible—it'll return if you stop taking T.) Some guys choose to take oral contraceptives to reduce the number of periods they have. (Both hormones and BC have lots of other side effects too...educate yrself!)

\*\* Some guys get hysterectomies, which gets rid of your period and all those reproductive organs forever (surgery is a big decision & \$\$\$...not so d.i.y./easy!)

some boys bleed

...and some women don't.

so why are periods gendered?



# THE PEANUT BUTTER & JELLY PAD PROJECT

24



+



Copied from  
"THE PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY PAD PROJECT"  
by skunkrising (wemoonsarmyandfringe@yahoo.com)

This is a topical experience and exercise for brave bio-men (people born male)...it is also a great conversation-starter and a physical undertaking toward understanding the very surface and material aspects of "feminine hygiene."

## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Read disclaimer below.
2. Take a maxipad, cloth pad, or rag and put peanut butter and jelly on it (1 T of each, at least)
3. Wear the pad.
4. Complete the checklist of events while wearing PB&J pad. (Checklist may be completed over any length of time.)
5. Checklist should be checked and initialed by a woman who has menstruated. This person must bear witness to the PB&J in some way and be able to verify that you have actually completed the tasks.
6. Once you've completed the checklist, cut out the certificate and put it on your wall! You are also eligible to be presented with a HAND-EMBROIDERED PATCH, the one and only original PB&J PAD PATCH! To receive your prize, email [wemoonsarmyandfringe@yahoo.com](mailto:wemoonsarmyandfringe@yahoo.com) to receive further instructions about how to get your prize.
7. Ready, set, go! Good luck!

**DISCLAIMER:** This project does not claim to be simulating the experience of menstruation, nor does it simulate what it feels like to be a woman, menstruating or no. Wearing a pad will not give the experience of hormones, shame/power, spirituality, cycling with the moon, worrying about pregnancy, contemplating babies or abortion, or of bleeding (on your new sheets, your new underwear, your hot date, or into the soil). Wearing a pad *will* open up a new awareness of menstruation, as you squish and waddle and chafe and smell like peanut butter.

## PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY PAD PROJECT CHECKLIST:

- ☐ a formal event, such as a wedding or funeral to which you are wearing formal clothes
- ☐ a sporting event in which you participate
- ☐ swimming (you don't have to wear it in the water, but to and from and deal with it)
- ☐ an intimate encounter such as making out or massage
- ☐ wear it to work all day & change it whenever you go to the bathroom
- ☐ sit on it for a few hours, like through a movie, a long bus ride, or school

**EXTRA CREDIT:** Eat half a loaf or white bread right before bed. Drink five shots of espresso the next morning. See how you feel by lunch. Wear your pad. Wear white pants.

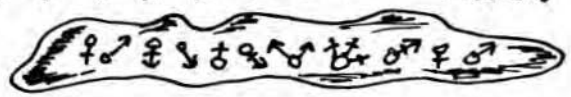




# blood & gender

STUFF YOU CAN DO, WHETHER YOU'RE TRANS OR NOT!

- whether or not you menstruate, carry unbleached pads/tampons for you/your buddies!
- don't make assumptions about peoples' genders or their ability to menstruate.
- when/if you are feeling down about your period, find ways to celebrate it & your body!
- share info with your friends about eco-friendly & non-toxic menstrual products... regardless of your friends' genders.
- respect peoples' pronouns! DON'T HARRASS trans people in the bathroom!
- give a big smile when you see someone washing out their Divacup in the sink!
- ask your partner about how they would like to be touched, how they like their body referred to. start an open conversation about period sex - you/yr partner might be totally squeamish, new but curious, or totally into playing with blood!
- speak out about how fucked up middle school sex ed was! educate your male-born friends/partners about periods, menstrual products, & period sex.
- START TALKING! tell your period stories - in a line, w/ your buddies, talk to yr sex ed teacher or nurse/doctor.
- **\* Interesting!! \***
  - some transmen on T & some transwomen experience monthly symptoms (cramps, mood swings, discharge) without actually bleeding... especially if they have female-bodied partners or housemates!
- **\* spread the word!**





**YEAST INFECTIONS** are caused by *Candida albicans* (a type of yeast—not the baking kind!) which is found in healthy vaginas. But sometimes it rapidly multiplies and takes over...

**symptoms usually include** intense itching/burning in vag/vulva, clumpy white discharge (kinda like ricotta cheese) or yellowy-clear discharge that smells like bread/beer/yeast.

**may be caused by** \*\*antibiotics\*\*...non-cotton/tight/dirty underwear...chemical dyes/perfumes...spermicide w/ nonoxonyl-9...poorly treated diabetes (→ high levels of sugar in yr pee)...contraceptive pills or pregnancy...injury or chafing to vulvar/vaginal mucous membranes (too much friction, not enough lube)...transmitted from your already-yeasty sexual partner (female or male)...weakened immune system...or stress.

**how to treat it: try yogurt!** (see instructions)

Insert unpeeled clove of garlic or wrap it in gauze/cheesecloth & attach a bit of floss for removal...or take garlic capsules.

Put lubricant & a few drops tea tree oil on the top half of a tampon & insert

**For itching:** dip a cotton ball in **aloe vera juice** and apply as needed (they won't kill the yeast though).

**Over-the-counter products** break down latex and are known to cause adverse/allergic reactions in some women.

**BACTERIAL VAGINOSIS** is an imbalance of naturally occurring bacteria that affects the vulva & vagina.

**symptoms include** itchy/painful vulva, dark yellow/green/brown/white/gray discharge that smells fishy (or rotten). ew!

**may be caused by** antibiotics...tight/noncotton clothing...chemicals & dyes...repeated intercourse in a short period of time.

**how to treat it:** Yogurt! Also try taking a bath with either 1-2 cups apple cider vinegar (for at least 20 minutes) or with a few drops tea tree oil. Either of these help kill the "bad" bacteria. You can also try rubbing a few drops of tea tree oil on your vulva. Folic acid supplements, garlic pills, or goldenseal pills will help your immune system stay strong and fight off the bacteria that causes BV. Try to decrease your excess carbs/sugars (they feed the bad bacteria). **To relieve itching,** use topical vitamin E ointment/gel. There are also prescription antibiotics (both vaginal and oral) available.

**All of these health problems can affect both men and women.** In most cases, they are less severe, or even symptomless, for men, who can therefore transmit them unknowingly. These descriptions and treatment ideas are therefore oriented toward female-bodied people...but make sure you talk to your sexual partner about the risks of transmission and their sexual history to keep your cunt healthy & happy.

By "intercourse," we mean penetrative sexual contact. Fingers, penises, and sex toys can all participate in spreading these infections, especially if they're dirty. Switch up your condoms/gloves or wash your hands whenever you switch partners or orifices.

# CUNT HEALTH

**URINARY TRACT INFECTION (UTI)** is when bacteria (esp. *E. coli*) gets up into your urinary tract through your urethra. if not stopped, it can spread to your kidneys/bladder which is super painful & can lead to cystitis (bladder cysts).

**symptoms include** having the constant urge to pee, burning (or blood) while peeing. Fever, vomiting, nausea, and/or back pain may be a sign of a kidney infection.

**may be caused by** getting bacteria, usually from anus/vagina into urethra via: intercourse...moving from the ass to the cunt...holding in your pee a long time...not peeing or not rinsing off your junk after sex...increased risk during pregnancy or for diaphragm users.

**how to treat it:** Water and cranberry juice will help dislodge the bacteria from the urethra. Try mixing 1/2 teaspoon baking soda into an 8oz cup of water—it'll raise the pH balance of your urine. Take vitamin C

tablets (at least 5000mg per day). Try echinacea and Oregon grape/rooibos/goldenseal tablets or tinctures. I've also heard that aromatherapy with essential oils of sandalwood, bergamot, & tea tree helps out (you can also rub these daily over your bladder area). Avoid processed food, citrus, tomatoes, dairy, spicy food, caffeine, alcohol, cigarettes, chocolate, carbonated drinks, and artificial sweeteners. DO eat blueberries and pineapple. To lessen pain, put a hot water bottle or hot compress over your bladder area.

## ACT EARLY...

**don't wait for the infection to spread!**

**STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR BODY.**

if it's getting worse as you treat it,

see a friendly doctor.

**EDUCATE YOURSELF**

before choosing a course of treatment.

**FOR ALL OF THESE (treatment & prevention!)**

\* drink lots of water and cranberry juice (diluted w/ water or apple juice if you want)

\* eat healthy

\* wear clean, 100% cotton underpants & avoid tight pants. sleep w/ clean or w/o undies.

\* when you pee, wipe front → back.

\* **DON'T** wash your cunt with soap, ESPECIALLY perfumed/chemical soap. vaginas are self-cleaning!

\* **YOGURT** is great. eat it daily! alternatively, there are 2 main ways to get its good bacteria to fight off your cunt problems:  
(1) fill a plastic tampon applicator with yogurt (opt. stick it in the freezer for a bit);  
(2) soak a tampon in yogurt and then insert. make sure the yogurt says "contains live cultures."

if the yogurt is not organic, it may contain the hormones and antibiotics which are fed to the cows!

BLOOD ART  
 AT PINK-PORCUPINE.  
 DEVIANTART.  
 COM



Compiled by  
 eliot fiend,  
 caro,  
 + zee!

For the 2010  
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& THANKS TO ALL THE AMAZING  
 ZINESTERS WE BORROWED FROM!  
 (+ learned)

- \* slingshot rad calendar&mo
- \* "herbal menstruation: a d.i.y. guide"  
 by alanna stitcher
- \* "wife's tales" (zine) by britton neubacher
- \* "menstruation celebration" (zine) by  
 m.fisher@antioch-college.edu
- \* pull the plug (zine) by erin w. (kansas city)
- \* "cultureslut 20" (zine) by amber forrester  
 (helloamber.etsy.com)
- \* christine heller's bio paper on birth control
- \* "the revolution begins here" (zine) by  
 the cascade hiv/aids project
- \* "queersafe" (zine)
- \* numerous home remedy websites
- \* Susan D. Baylies (snakeandsnake.com)
- \* "fire down below" (zine) by erin tobey
- \* "chart it!" (zine)
- \* "what your momma (or your dr. or your  
 teacher or anybody) never told you  
 about your period" by lynne j. purvis
- \* "moonifestations" by divya
- \* the PB&J pad project (zine) by  
 skunkisrising
- & the madison, WI infoshop
- + ART by pink-porcupine.deviantart.com,  
 us, erin tobey, & zines above.

check out these zines on [qzap.org](http://qzap.org)  
 or from your local infoshop/zine library  
 for more info/resources!